

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

knowledge of yourself." Love of self has corrupted prelates and subjects alike, and no one dares begin the work of reform. " The sick man is blind, for he knows not his own need, and the pastor, who is the physician, is blind, for he considers nothing save his own pleasure and advantage, and, in order not to lose that, does not employ the knife of justice nor the fire of most ardent charity. Such a one is truly a hireling shepherd, because not only does he not draw his little sheep out of the hand of the wolf, but he himself devours them ; and the cause of all this is that he loves himself without God, and does not follow sweet Jesus, the true Shepherd, who has given His life for His sheep. O *babbo mio*, sweet Christ on earth, follow that sweet Gregory, for it will be as possible to you to quench self-love as it was to him, for he was of the same flesh as you ; and the same God is now who was then ; we only need virtue and hunger for the salvation of souls. This is our remedy, father ; that we lift up this love above ourselves and every creature outside God ; let us think no more of friends and kinsmen, nor of temporal necessities, but only of virtue and of the exaltation of spiritual things ; for temporal things are failing you for no other reason save that you have abandoned the care of spiritual things." " I beseech you to send to Lucca and to Pisa, dealing with them like a father as God will teach you, helping them in whatever can be done, and inviting them to stand firm and persevere. I have been at Pisa and at Lucca until now, inviting them, to the utmost of my power, not to make a league with the putrid members who are rebels to you. But they are in great perplexity, because they have no encouragement from you, and are being continually urged with threats by the other side to join it. But, up to now, they have not entirely consented. I beseech you also to write forcibly to Messer Piero, and do it zealously and do not delay. I have heard that you have made, some cardinals. I believe that it would be more to the honour of God, and better for yourself, if you would always take care to make virtuous men. If the contrary is done, it will be a great insult to God and the ruination of Holy Church. And let us not wonder afterwards, if God sends His chastisements and His